

REMARKS

In the transmittal letter of March 8, 2002 filing the national phase of this application under § 371, it was noted that the attached copy of the application was a "copy of the International Application as filed." However, it actually was a copy of the International Application as amended under Rule 34. Since this is the copy of the international application to be examined, it is not believed this typographical error created any confusion, particularly since the Examiner considered the claims 1-14 as amended under Article 34 and not the original 16 claims submitted with the international application. However, if there is any question concerning the correct specification, please advise the undersigned and a Substitute Specification will be filed.

In response to the above Office Action, the specification has been amended to include subheadings as required by Rule 77.

In addition, claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 3 and claim 3 has been cancelled. All of the remaining claims have been amended to avoid improper multiple dependency and to place the claims in a more traditional U.S. format.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected assembly claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,790,748 to *Van Laethem et al.*, hereafter Van Laethem, but considered claims 3-11 to contain allowable subject matter. Since claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 3 and claims 2 and 4-11 are dependent directly or indirectly from amended claim 1, it is believed claims 1, 2 and 4-11 are now in condition for allowance.

Withdrawal of Van Laethem as a ground of rejection of the assembly claims is therefore requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner also rejected method claims 12-13 and product-by-process claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for being obvious over Van Laethem.

Independent method claim 12 includes, *inter alia*, the steps of locating a heating means in the gap between the first and second sheet means and then filling at least part of this gap with a bonding medium so that the “heating means is embedded in said bonding medium.”

In the Examiner’s Statement of Reasons for Allowance of the assembly claims, it was noted that “the prior art fails to reasonably teach or suggest [that] said heating means is embedded within said bonding medium as set forth in the claimed combination.” Since this is also a feature of independent method claim 12, it is not seen why claim 12 is considered obvious over Van Laethem.

As required by MPEP § 2143, to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the prior art reference relied on must teach or suggest all of the claimed limitations. Since the Examiner has acknowledged that Van Laethem “fails to reasonably teach or suggest” a claimed limitation of method claim 12, the claim cannot be obvious in view of this reference.

Withdrawal of Van Laethem as a ground of rejection of claims 12-14 is therefore also requested.

It is believed claims 1, 2 and 4-14 are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner returned an acknowledged copy of the Form PTO 1449 (listing 10 references) that accompanied one of the Information Disclosure Statements filed June 10, 2002, but not the Form PTO 1449 (listing 8 references) filed with the other Information Disclosure Statement at the same time. Also, the Examiner did not return an acknowledged copy of the Form PTO 1449 that accompanied the Information Disclosure Statement filed August 20, 2003. It would be appreciated if the Examiner would return acknowledged copies of both of these Forms PTO 1449 with his next communication.

Finally, this is to advise the Examiner that another Information Disclosure Statement is being filed simultaneously with this Amendment including a reference cited in the corresponding Chinese application.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

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